

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 1246

By Naifeh

A RESOLUTION to recognize and honor Mr. W.S. "Babe" Howard upon his induction into the NJCAA Hall of Fame.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that this General Assembly should pause to pay tribute to those exemplary civic leaders who through their extraordinary efforts have contributed significantly to the growth and prosperity of their respective communities; and

WHEREAS, Mr. W.S. "Babe" Howard is most assuredly one such distinguished citizen who is worthy of special recognition; and

WHEREAS, Babe Howard has been selected for induction into the National Junior College Athletic Association Hall of Fame for his many contributions to the game of baseball and to young players in the Mid-South area; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Howard will be inducted into this prestigious group of a few select individuals on May 28, 2004, in Grand Junction, Colorado; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Howard generously built a stadium for young players to gain the exposure required to compete for college scholarships and professional contracts; in an age where most stadiums are built as an investment for monetary gain, Babe Howard built USA Stadium for the Millington community, young baseball players, and baseball fans; and

WHEREAS, Babe Howard will be the first non-coach/non-player who has been elected into the NJCAA Hall of Fame, an honor most befitting Mr. Howard's many contributions to the sport; and

WHEREAS, an indispensable member of the Millington community, Mr. Howard has been a reliable staple in the town's professional and community affairs for more than fifty years; and

WHEREAS, Millington Telephone Company (MTC), for which Mr. Howard has been the president and general manager since 1953, recently celebrated its 75th anniversary of service to Millington and the surrounding areas; and

WHEREAS, even more impressive than the longevity of this company is the integrity and dedication that it evinces in all of its endeavors; and

WHEREAS, respected as a businessman as well as a civic leader, Babe Howard has contributed extensively to the community, including sponsorship of numerous youth activities such as scouting, cheerleading, baseball, and softball teams and generous donations to universities, hospitals, and military programs such as the Naval Air Technical Training Center; and

WHEREAS, the MTC sponsored an American Legion baseball team for more than twenty years, providing the visibility and exposure that local players needed to win collegiate scholarships for their athletic ability; and

WHEREAS, when Mr. Howard and the MTC realized that the team lacked adequate facilities, they provided the land and funds to build a new stadium for the squad; and

WHEREAS, this complex eventually grew into USA Stadium, where Team USA practiced and played from 1988 until 1998, thus bringing Olympic sports to the small town of Millington; and

WHEREAS, during its tenure, USA Stadium encouraged camaraderie and civic pride in the Millington community; local citizens volunteered in the concession stands, as parking attendants, and to host players; and

WHEREAS, the house that Babe Howard built has earned a reputation as a premier sporting facility; more than 200 major league players trained and played in USA Stadium, and twenty national champions were crowned in the same ballpark; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Howard's selection for the NJCAA Hall of Fame also recognizes his many positive influences on the Amateur Athletics Union (AAU), American Legion baseball, and National Amateur Baseball Federation (NABF); for example, every single player on the American Legion team that Babe Howard sponsored earned a college scholarship; and

WHEREAS, for these and numerous other contributions to the game of baseball, Babe Howard was inducted into the Tennessee Baseball Hall of Fame in 1992; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Howard's philosophy has always been to give back to the community; his unselfish character and generosity of spirit knows few boundaries; and

WHEREAS, the first President of the Millington Chamber of Commerce and a Millington Alderman, Mr. Howard is an active member of numerous local organizations, including the South Tipton County Chamber of Commerce, Millington United Fund, Founder and Director of the Millington Crime Stoppers, Millington Planning Commission, Shelby County School Board, President of the Lions Club, Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion, and the Navy League, and he is a Scottish Rite Mason; and

WHEREAS, an avid supporter of preservation efforts relative to local history and the environment, he was an integral part of the restoration of the oldest home in Millington and the protection of a stretch of the Wolf River from destruction; he has previously served as a Chairman for the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Commission, and is also a member of the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Foundation and the Tennessee Parks and Greenways Foundation; and

WHEREAS, Babe Howard's awards and accolades are innumerable; among his many honors, he has been recognized as the Millington Chamber of Commerce's Man of the Year, South Tipton County Chamber of Commerce's Man of the Year, Millington Jaycees' Boss of the Year, Millington Community Day "Man of the Year," and received the State of Tennessee Humanitarian Award; and

WHEREAS, an important figure on the state and national scene, Mr. Howard has been a member of the Tennessee Telephone Association for more than thirty years, serving as President, Director, and Secretary-Treasurer; he also served as the nationwide director of the United States Telephone Association, the Independent Telephone Pioneer Association, the Organization for the Protection and Advancement of Small Telephone Companies, and the Rural Electrification Administration Telephone Bank Board; and

WHEREAS, an exceptional asset to his community, Mr. Howard is a public-spirited citizen of the highest order; and

WHEREAS, he first answered his country's call to duty during World War II, when he served in the 508th Parachute Infantry Regiment in Europe during the war and then served as Honor Guard under General Eisenhower during the occupation of Germany; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Mr. Howard shared the love and companionship of his devoted wife, Ann Anderson Howard, for more than fifty years before her passing in 2002; he enjoys the admiration and respect of his four children, six grandchildren, and five great-grandchildren; and

WHEREAS, Babe Howard is a dedicated father and grandfather who evinces a great generosity of spirit in all his endeavors, and he epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Howard is a man of impeccable character and conviction who thrives on the time-honored values of hard work and perseverance; he is a man of loyalty and devotion, qualities to which his family and his community can well attest, and he is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State";

WHEREAS, his commitment to the Millington community, which extends beyond the realm of athletics, merits special recognition, especially as we celebrate his commendable selection into the NJCAA Hall of Fame; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED THIRD GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby congratulate Mr. W.S. "Babe" Howard upon his induction into the NJCAA Hall of Fame, honor him for his honorable and astute service to the good people of Millington and the State of Tennessee, salute his unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction, and thank him for his many contributions to the growth and prosperity of our State and Nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.